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ABSTRACT

An analysis was undertaken of the self-perceived role of administrative office managers in participative management. The primary purpose of the study was to enable office educators to develop relevant instructional programs based on current practices found in the business world. Data were compiled from 132 usable questionnaire responses returned by the randomly selected sample of 250 administrative office managers. Factors studied were: sex, age, number of years in present position, number of subordinates, level of education, major in college, previous work and supervisory experience, and frequency and percentage of response for managerial activities. Characteristics having the greatest influence on the extent to which participative management is being utilized are age and sex of the administrative office managers. Background factors having significant influence are military experience, military officer experience, other office experience, and number of subordinates. It was also concluded that both managers and office employees need training in developing a participative atmosphere. Implications for business education teachers include the increasing need for preparing students to assume roles in decision making activities and encouraging the utilization of appropriate training materials. (MW)

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE MANAGERS' UTILIZATION OF PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT IN SUPERVISING OFFICE EMPLOYEES

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This study was an analysis of the role that administrative office managers perceive for the utilization of participative management in supervising office employees. The primary purpose for undertaking the study was to enable office educators to develop relevant instructional programs based on current practices found in the business world.

In conducting the research for this study, an attempt was made to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent is participative management utilized by administrative office managers in each of the following 27 activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions?

A. Planning Function

1. Writing short-term departmental objectives
2. Evaluating existing resources necessary to achieve departmental objectives
3. Writing long-term departmental objectives
4. Identifying primary duties of jobs that must be performed

B. Organizing Function

5. Developing lines of communication within department
6. Defining relationships among jobs in department
7. Defining lines of authority within department
8. Defining responsibilities of subordinates in department
9. Developing efficient methods and procedures for office work

C. Staffing Function

10. Recruiting candidates for positions in department
11. Preparing descriptions of various departmental jobs
12. Orienting new employees in department
13. Appraising candidates for positions in department
14. Training new subordinates for department
15. Selecting candidates for positions in department

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D. Directing Function

16. Formulating personnel policies necessary to maintain desirable level of morale
17. Establishing procedures for uniformity of work
18. Preparing directives for accomplishment of departmental objectives
19. Supervising subordinates in department
20. Making accurate measurement of work through development of systematic procedures

D. Controlling Function

21. Determining whether objectives are being achieved
22. Preparing office manuals for departmental employees
23. Formulating standards of performance based on goals, policies, programs, budgets
24. Adopting means of reviewing operations to check if expected results are obtained
25. Taking corrective action if there is a failure to achieve objectives
26. Writing departmental policies for employees
27. Measuring performance of departmental employees

2. To what extent do the following 12 characteristics and background factors of administrative office managers affect the degree to which they, as administrative office managers, seek employee participation in the 27 selected managerial activities and the five managerial functions:

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Length of time in present position
4. Number of subordinates
5. Level of educational attainment
6. College major or area of specialization
7. Military experience
8. Military officer experience
9. Number of years of supervisory office experience
10. Number of years of clerical office experience
11. Number of years of general office experience
12. Number of years of other office experience

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were tested in light of the analysis of the data.

1. There is a significant relationship between the sex of the administrative office manager and the extent to which he utilizes participative management in each of the activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions.

2. There is a significant relationship between the age of the administrative office manager and the extent to which he utilizes participative management in each

of the activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions.

3. There is a significant relationship between the length of time the administrative office manager has been employed in his present position and the extent to which he utilizes participative management in each of the activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions.

4. There is a significant relationship between the number of subordinates that the administrative office manager supervises and the extent to which he utilizes participative management in each of the activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions.

5. There is a significant relationship between the educational attainment of the administrative office manager and the extent to which he utilizes participative management in each of the activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions.

6. There is a significant relationship between the college major or area of specialization of the administrative office manager and the extent to which he utilizes participative management in each of the activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions.

7. There is a significant relationship between the military experience of the administrative office manager and the extent to which he utilizes participative management in each of the activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions.

8. There is a significant relationship between the military officer experience of the administrative office manager and the extent to which he utilizes participative management in each of the activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions.

9. There is a significant relationship between the number of years of office experience of the administrative office manager and the extent to which he utilizes participative management in each of the activities in the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY

Sources of Data

The data involved in this study were compiled from 132 usable responses returned by the randomly selected sample of 250 administrative office managers employed in 250 companies that were dually listed in the 1971 Fortune magazine 1,000 list and the 1971 College Placement Annual.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part I was concerned with the respondent's sex, age, number of years employed in present position, number of

subordinates supervised, level of educational attainment, college major, military experience, military officer experience, and number of years of office work experience.

Part II was concerned with the extent ("always," "often," "sometimes," "seldom," "never") to which administrative office managers utilize the help, ideas, and suggestions of their subordinates in selected managerial activities in each of five managerial functions--planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling.

Selecting the Sample

In selecting the sample, the first step was to determine which companies were dually listed in the 1971 College Placement Annual and the 1971 Fortune magazine 1,000 list. Of the 358 companies dually listed, 250 were then selected randomly by utilizing a table of random numbers.

Statistical Analysis

The CISSR - ACT II - PFCOUNT computer program was utilized to compile the data. Chi-square statistical analysis was used to study the nature of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Chi-square test of independence was used to test the null hypotheses that the selected variables were essentially independent of one another. The .05 level of significance was used.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Sex

Approximately 95 percent of the respondents were male and five percent were female.

The relationships between sex and each of the 27 managerial activities resulted in the following significant relationships (.05 level):

1. Defining responsibilities of subordinates in department.

   Males tend to utilize more participation; females, less participation.

2. Appraising candidates for positions in department.

   Males tend to utilize more participation; females, less participation.

3. Taking corrective action if there is a failure to achieve objectives.

   Males tend to utilize more participation; females less participation.

4. Measuring performance of departmental subordinates.

   Males tend to utilize more participation; females, less participation.

Age

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents were between ages of 35 and 55. Approximately 25 percent were less than 35 years of age, and 12 percent were between ages 55 and 65.

Significant relationships were found between age and the following managerial activities:

1. Defining responsibilities of subordinates in department.

   The older administrative office managers tend to use more participation than do the younger administrative office managers.

2. Developing efficient methods and procedures for office work.

   The older administrative office managers tend to use more participation than do the younger administrative office managers.

3. Recruiting candidates for positions in department.

   The older administrative office managers tend to use more participation than do the younger administrative office managers.

4. Selecting candidates for positions in department.

   The older administrative office managers tend to use more participation than do the younger administrative office managers.

Number of Years in Present Position

Approximately 30 percent of the respondents had been in their present positions for one through three years, and nearly 23 percent had held their present jobs for four through six years. Eighteen percent had held their present positions for less than one year; nine percent, seven through nine years; and nineteen percent, ten or more years.

The following two significant relationships were found to exist between the number of years in present position and the selected managerial activities:

1. Orienting new employees in department.

   As the administrative office managers hold their present positions for a longer time, they tend to utilize more participation.

2. Supervising subordinates in department.

   As the administrative office managers hold their present positions for a longer time, they tend to utilize more participation.

Number of Subordinates

Nearly 33 percent of the respondents supervised five or fewer subordinates while 20 percent supervised six to ten subordinates. Six percent of the respondents supervised 16 to 20 subordinates, and 37 percent supervised 21 or more employees.

The following illustrate the significant relationships between number of subordinates and the 27 selected managerial activities:

1. Preparing descriptions of various departmental jobs.

   As the number of subordinates supervised increases, so does the amount of participation utilized by administrative office managers.

2. Preparing directives for accomplishment of departmental jobs.

   As the number of subordinates supervised increases, so does the amount of participation utilized by administrative office managers.

3. Formulating standards of performance based on goals, policies, programs, budgets.

   As the number of subordinates supervised increases, so does the amount of participation utilized by administrative office managers.

Level of Education

All of the respondents had been graduated from high school, but three percent had not gone beyond the high school level of educational attainment. One percent had less than one year of college, whereas 13 percent had at least one year of college but had not received a degree. Fifty-eight percent had received a bachelor's degree; 15 percent, a master's degree; and nine percent had work beyond a master's degree.

The following is the only significant relationship found to exist between level of educational attainment and the managerial activities:

1. Supervising subordinates in department.

   The administrative office managers with higher levels of education tend to utilize less participation than do those with lower levels of education.

Major in College

Fifty-two percent of the respondents majored in business or commerce in college, whereas 43 percent majored in a nonbusiness or noncommerce area. Nonbusiness/commerce areas most frequently cited were psychology, education, and engineering. (Six respondents did not answer the questionnaire item).

The significant relationships between major in college and the 27 selected activities are as follows:

1. Making accurate measurement of work through development of systematic procedure.

   Nonbusiness/commerce majors tend to utilize more participation than do their counterparts.

2. Measuring performance of departmental subordinates.

   Nonbusiness/commerce majors tend to utilize more participation than do their counterparts.

Military Experience

Approximately 28 percent of the administrative office managers reported no military experience; nine percent reported less than two years of active duty; 53 percent, two through four years of active duty; and seven percent, more than four years of active duty.

Significant relationships were found to exist between military experience and the following activities:

1. Defining relationships among jobs in department.

   As the length of military experience of the respondents increases, there is less participation utilized.

2. Defining lines of authority in department.

   As the length of military experience of the respondents increases, there is more participation utilized.

3. Defining responsibilities of subordinates in department.

   As the length of military experience of the respondents increases, there is less participation utilized.

4. Orienting new employees in department.

   As the length of military experience of the respondents increases, there is more participation utilized.

5. Appraising candidates for positions in department.

   As the length of military experience of the respondents increases, there is more participation utilized.

6. Training new subordinates in department.

   As the length of military experience of the respondents increases, there is more participation utilized.

7. Establishing procedures for uniformity of work.

   As the length of military experience of the respondents increases, there is less participation utilized.

8. Writing departmental policies for employees.

   As the length of military experience of the respondents increases, there is more participation utilized.

Military Officer Experience

Approximately 30 percent of the respondents have been an officer in the military while 69 percent have not been an officer in the military. (Two individuals did not respond to the item).

The following are the significant relationships between military officer experience and the managerial activities:

1. Writing short-term departmental objectives.

   The respondents with military officer experience tend to utilize less participation than do their counterparts.

2. Identifying primary duties of jobs that must be performed.

   The respondents with military officer experience tend to utilize less participation than do their counterparts.

3. Defining relationships among jobs in department.

   The respondents with military officer experience tend to utilize less participation than do their counterparts.

4. Defining lines of authority within department.

   The respondents with military officer experience tend to utilize less participation than do their counterparts.

5. Defining responsibilities of subordinates in department.

   The respondents with military officer experience tend to utilize less participation than do their counterparts.

6. Appraising candidates for positions in department.

   The respondents with military officer experience tend to utilize less participation than do their counterparts.

7. Measuring performance of departmental subordinates.

   The respondents with military officer experience tend to utilize less participation than do their counterparts.

Supervisory Experience

Nearly ten percent of the respondents reported no previous supervisory experience while two percent reported less than two years. Fifteen percent listed two through four years of experience; 11 percent, five through seven years; eight percent, eight through ten years; and 53 percent, 11 or more years of supervisory experience.

The following are the significant relationships between supervisory experience and the selected managerial activities:

1. Appraising candidates for positions in department.

   The respondents with greater amounts of supervisory experience tend to allow more participation than those with lesser amounts of supervisory experience.

2. Selecting candidates for positions in department.

   The respondents with greater amounts of supervisory experience tend to allow more participation than those with lesser amounts of supervisory experience.

Clerical Office Experience

Nearly 79 percent of the respondents reported no clerical office experience; six percent, less than two years of clerical office experience; seven percent, two through four years; three percent, five through seven years; two percent, eight through ten years; and .76 percent, 11 or more years of clerical experience.

The following is the one significant relationship between clerical office experience and the selected managerial activities:

1. Formulating personnel policies necessary to maintain desirable level of morale.

   As the number of years of clerical office experience of the administrative office managers increases, the amount of participation utilized decreases.

General Office Experience

Approximately 67 percent of the respondents reported no general office experience; nine percent, less than two years; 11 percent, two through four years of general office experience; five percent, five through seven years; two percent, eight through ten years; and five percent reported 11 or more years of general office experience.

The following is the one significant relationship between general office experience and the managerial activities:

1. Selecting candidates for positions in department.

   As the number of years of general office experience increases, the amount of participation utilized decreases.

Other Office Experience

Seventy-five percent of the respondents reported no other type of office experience; five percent, less than two years of other office experience; three percent, two through four years; eight percent, five through seven years; three percent, eight through ten years; and five percent had 11 or more years of other office experience.

The significant relationships between other office experience and the managerial activities are as follows:

1. Evaluating existing resources necessary to achieve departmental goals.

   As the amount of other office experience increases, so does the amount of participation utilized.

2. Defining responsibilities of subordinates in department.

   As the amount of other office experience increases, the amount of participation utilized decreases.

3. Recruiting candidates for positions in department.

   As the amount of other office experience increases, the amount of participation utilized decreases.

4. Orienting new employees in department.

   As the amount of other office experience increases, the amount of participation utilized decreases.

5. Appraising candidates for positions in department.

   As the amount of other office experience increases, so does the amount of participation utilized.

6. Selecting candidates for positions in department.

   As the amount of other office experience increases, the amount of participation utilized decreases.

7. Establishing procedures for uniformity of work.

   As the amount of other office experience increases, the amount of participation utilized decreases.

8. Supervising subordinates in department.

   As the amount of other office experience increases, so does the amount of participation utilized.

9. Determining whether objectives are being achieved.

   As the amount of other office experience increases, the amount of participation utilized decreases.

10. Formulating standards of performance based on goals, policies, programs, budgets.

    As the amount of other office experience increases, the amount of participation utilized decreases.

11. Measuring performance of departmental subordinates.

    As the amount of other office experience increases, so does the amount of participative management utilized.

Frequency and Percentage of Response for Managerial Activities

Table 1 identifies the administrative office managers' frequency and percentage of response to each of the questionnaire items concerned with the selected managerial activities.

An examination of the table reveals the following findings:

1. The five activities in which administrative office managers utilized employee participation to the greatest extent are:

   a. Developing lines of communication within department--5.05[1]
   b. Training new subordinates in department--5.02
   c. Recruiting candidates for positions in department--4.99
   d. Orienting new employees in department--4.98
   e. Establishing procedures for uniformity of work--4.94

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[1]This number reflects the weighted mean for this particular activity. The weighted mean was obtained by multiplying the frequency of response in the "Not Applicable" column by 1; "Never," by 2; "Seldom," by 3; "Sometimes," by 4; "Often," by 5; and "Always," by 6.

Table 1

FREQUENCY COUNTS AND PERCENTAGE RESPONSES FOR SELECTED MANAGERIAL ACTIVITIES

Activities	Not Applicable		Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Weighted Mean
	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	
PLANNING													
1. Writing short-term departmental objectives	4	3.0	4	3.0	16	12.1	45	34.1	38	28.8	25	18.9	4.39
2. Evaluating existing resources necessary to achieve departmental goals	4	3.0	1	0.7	10	7.6	29	22.0	58	43.9	30	22.7	4.71
3. Writing long-term departmental objectives	5	3.8	9	6.8	23	17.4	38	28.8	28	21.2	29	22.0	4.23
4. Identifying primary duties of jobs that must be performed	2	1.5	5	3.8	20	15.2	26	19.7	45	34.1	34	25.6	4.48
TOTAL	15	2.8	19	3.6	69	13.1	138	26.1	169	32.0	118	22.3	4.48
ORGANIZING													
1. Developing lines of communication within department	2	1.5	1	0.7	8	6.1	21	15.9	46	34.8	54	40.9	5.05
2. Defining relationships among jobs in department	4	3.0	2	1.5	19	14.4	30	22.7	45	34.1	32	24.2	4.56
3. Defining lines of authority within department	4	3.0	9	6.8	19	14.4	37	28.0	34	25.8	29	22.0	4.33
4. Defining responsibilities of subordinates in department	1	0.7	8	6.1	14	10.6	35	26.5	41	31.1	33	25.0	4.56
5. Developing efficient methods and procedures for office work	3	2.3	2	1.5	4	3.0	30	22.7	57	43.2	36	27.3	4.85
TOTAL	14	2.1	22	3.3	64	9.7	153	23.2	223	33.8	184	27.9	4.67
STAFFING													
1. Recruiting candidates for positions in department	1	0.7	5	3.8	5	3.8	24	18.2	45	34.1	52	39.4	4.99
2. Preparing descriptions of various departmental jobs	5	3.8	1	0.7	16	12.1	27	20.5	39	29.5	44	33.3	4.71
3. Orienting new employees in department	6	4.5	2	1.5	5	3.8	22	16.7	38	28.8	59	44.7	4.98
4. Appraising candidates for positions in department	2	1.5	6	4.5	12	9.1	22	16.7	42	31.8	48	36.4	4.82
5. Training new subordinates in department	1	0.7	5	3.8	9	6.8	23	17.4	32	24.2	62	47.0	5.02
6. Selecting candidates for positions in department	1	0.7	9	6.8	9	6.8	32	24.2	37	28.0	44	33.3	4.72
TOTAL	16	2.0	28	3.5	56	7.1	150	18.9	233	29.4	309	39.0	4.87
DIRECTING													
1. Formulating personnel policies necessary to maintain desirable level of morale	2	1.5	1	0.7	5	3.8	32	24.2	61	46.2	31	23.5	4.83
2. Establishing procedures for uniformity of work	3	2.3	1	0.7	2	1.5	26	19.7	63	47.7	37	28.0	4.94

Table 1, Continued

Activities	Not Applicable		Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Weighted Mean
	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	
DIRECTING, Continued													
3. Preparing directives for accomplishment of departmental objectives	6	4.5	1	0.7	10	7.6	44	33.3	37	28.0	34	25.8	4.37
4. Supervising subordinates in department	4	3.0	5	3.8	12	9.1	27	20.5	34	25.8	50	37.9	4.76
5. Making accurate measurement of work through development of systematic procedures	14	10.6	4	3.0	14	10.6	43	32.6	35	26.5	22	16.7	4.11
TOTALS	29	4.4	12	1.8	43	6.5	172	26.1	230	34.8	174	26.4	4.64
CONTROLLING													
1. Determining whether objectives are being achieved	3	2.3	2	1.5	6	4.5	29	22.0	43	32.6	49	37.1	4.92
2. Preparing office manuals for departmental employees	15	11.4	2	1.5	14	10.6	30	22.7	33	25.0	38	28.8	4.35
3. Formulating standards of performance based on goals, policies, programs, budgets	2	1.5	1	0.7	18	13.6	26	19.7	40	30.3	45	34.1	4.79
4. Adopting means of reviewing operations to check if expected results are obtained	5	3.8	1	0.7	15	11.4	37	28.0	43	32.6	31	23.5	4.55
5. Taking corrective action if there is a failure to achieve objectives	1	0.7	5	3.8	11	8.3	30	22.7	47	35.6	38	28.8	4.75
6. Writing departmental policies of employees	5	3.8	6	4.5	18	13.6	42	31.8	36	27.3	25	18.9	4.31
7. Measuring performance of departmental employees	2	1.5	11	8.3	14	10.6	28	21.2	32	24.2	45	34.1	4.61
TOTAL	33	3.6	28	3.0	96	10.4	222	24.0	274	29.7	271	29.3	4.61

2. The five activities in which the administrative office managers utilized the least amount of employee participation are:

   a. Making accurate measurement of work through development of systematic procedures--4.11
   b. Writing long-term departmental objectives--4.23
   c. Writing departmental policies for employees--4.31
   d. Defining lines of authority within department--4.33
   e. Preparing office manuals for office employees--4.35

The ranking of the managerial activities from the most participative to the least participative is as follows:

1. Staffing--4.87
2. Organizing--4.67
3. Directing--4.64
4. Controlling--4.61
5. Planning--4.48

CONCLUSIONS

1. Although the concept of participative management is not new, it is receiving an increasing amount of emphasis in the current literature.

2. Participative management is a useful technique in supervising office employees; therefore, it should be utilized to a greater extent than is presently the situation.

3. Administrative office managers are using participative management to a considerable extent in supervising office employees. It should be pointed out, however, that participative management is being used to a greater extent in some of the managerial activities than in other managerial activities.

4. The extent to which administrative office managers utilize participative management in supervising office employees is influenced by (a) various characteristics of the administrative office managers; and (b) various background factors of the administrative office managers. Characteristics having the greatest influence on the extent to which participative management is being utilized are age and sex of the administrative office managers. The background factors having a significant influence are military experience, military officer experience, other office experience (other than clerical or general office experience), and number of subordinates.

5. Because of the extent to which participative management is being utilized, administrative office managers need training in the techniques of using participative management.

6. Since an increasing number of office employees are supervised by participative management techniques, they should be given training in effectively working in a participative atmosphere.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Teachers are encouraged to assess the extent to which they are preparing their students to assume roles in participative decision-making activities.

2. Teachers whose students will eventually enter supervisory office positions are encouraged to adequately prepare their students to utilize participative management in supervising office employees.

3. Teachers whose students will hold nonsupervisory office positions are encouraged to train their students to be effective participators in decision-making activities.

4. Teachers are encouraged to develop and utilize appropriate materials to train their students to be successful in a participative atmosphere. Suggestions for materials include in-baskets, case studies, model office situations, role playing, and simulations.

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